



Venango Region
Catholic School

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



We are excited to publish Volume 1 Issue 1 of the VRCS Monthly Newsletter as a direct response to one of the most frequent suggestions I have heard for how we can improve our communications.

Our aim with the newsletter is to get the word out regarding news / events that may be of interest to alumni, current families, parishioners, and regional businesses. We have a large number of stakeholders, and we want to share our good news with all of you!

Melissa Singh (VC '05), a VRCS parent and current

Home & School (H&S) Association member, has offered to help me with the design for this monthly publication.

Let us know what you think and feel free to share news items with us! We want to hear from you.

May God Bless our efforts!

Ray



2023 SPRING CHEER
CLINIC AT ST. STEPHEN
CAMPUS

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

A LETTER FROM
THE INTERIM VRCS
PRESIDENT + SCHOOL
MISSION STATEMENT

BACK-TO-SCHOOL
NEWS

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT +
PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

CURRENT EVENTS -
GOLF OUTING /
SUMMER FESTIVAL



SCHOOL UPDATE

WELCOMING THE NEW INTERIM PRESIDENT

Ray Feroz, Ph.D. has been named as Venango Region Catholic School Interim President. He is a graduate of St. Stephen School and VCHS (Class of '68).

Previously, he was a professor and department chair at Clarion University. He has also worked in clinical and administrative roles at UPMC Northwest, Warren State Hospital, and Polk Center.

Dr. Feroz brings a unique perspective and some firsthand knowledge of VRCS having served on the Board of Directors.



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TODAY'S YOUTH MAKE THE FUTURE LOOK BRIGHTER



VOLLEYBALL SEASON IS IN FULL SWING

The VCHS Volleyball team has already played in one tournament and has had three seasonal games. **Coach Wessell** and his eleven member team have been working hard in practice and on the court.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

I am thrilled to begin the 2023-2024 school year! I would like to thank the parents / guardians of SS and VC students for the privilege of working with their children every day!

The faculty, staff and VRCS administration were elated to greet incoming students on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, for the First Day of School.

To fully ensure each child's success, we partner with families to help our students grow academically, emotionally and spiritually. Our students are always at the heart of all we do. Thank you for believing in Venango Region Catholic School and valuing the quality of education provided at VRCS.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Ms. Katherine Chandley

Ms. Katherine Chandley, Principal

PRAYER REQUESTS



In the month of September, we pray that VRCS families and faculty will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.

Please remember to keep our school staff and students in your daily prayers. 🇺🇸

FIRST LITURGY OF THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

On Thursday, August 31, students from SSS and VCHS attended Mass at the newly renovated St. Joseph Church in Oil City. The pastor, **Rev. John Miller**, celebrated the Mass. VRCS first graders had an opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills (taught by Fr. Miller) of genuflecting and making the sign of the cross!

At the conclusion of Mass, Fr. Miller pointed out the painting of St. Augustine displayed on the church ceiling (alongside other Doctors of the Church). He challenged the students to research the meaning of the heart symbol painted beside the saint. Do you know what the heart represents?

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

DISTINGUISHED ALUM

NAME: Richard Sabousky, Ph.D.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT:

Professor of Education

Grove City College, Grove City, PA

* Primary focus - facilitating student success in reading and mathematics.

* I am currently consulting with North Clarion School District.

TEACHING CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

* I began my career in education at *Keystone Elementary School* and later worked at both *DuBois High School* and at the then *Venango County Vocational Technical School* (now VTDC).

* For 28 years, I was a faculty member + department chair at *Clarion University* (now known as *Penn West*).

* I also worked at *Drexel University* as a course writer and online instructor.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

Over 34 years, my previous band, *The Southern Knights*, played numerous charitable events together. My current band, *The Route 8 Band*, will be playing a benefit for VRCS in the near future.

DID YOU HAVE A FAVORITE TEACHER?

This is a hard one... **Dr. James A. Ruby**, of course, but **Mrs. Hilton** and **Father Butryn** were close seconds.

SHARE A FUNNY VC MEMORY:

Being Lutheran and winning the theology award at graduation.

BENEFITS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

The preparation at VC kept me on a professional path and provided the background knowledge that was important in negotiating the rigors of college and even doctoral studies.

FAVORITE CLASS AT VC:

Senior Advanced History

WHAT CAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFER TO YOUTH?

Catholic education provides us with an awakening that we do not always have as much control over events as we think. The notion of vocation and the idea of a calling is not foreign to you... heed that call to be in the service of others. I *never, ever, never* wanted to be a teacher, but I was dragged kicking and screaming into education where I was shown meaning and purpose.

ANY OTHER WORDS OF ADVICE?

Finding oneself in a crisis over the future [or a possible] career choice leads me to borrowing from Pope Francis' *Let Us Dream*: "The basic rule of a crisis is that you don't come out of it the same. If you get through it, you come out better or worse, but never the same. [You] need to use this as an opportunity to create something new."

Richard Sabousky, Ph.D. (VCHS Class of '79) graduated with a class of 75 members. Born and raised in Oil City, he was selected as our first distinguished alumni spotlight because of his significant contributions to special and regular education.

He has served the community on a variety of boards and committees, including the VRCS Board, VTDC, Pennsylvania Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children, and The International Dyslexia Association (PA Chapter). Dr. Sabousky aided in the development of Structured Literacy Guidelines for teacher preparation programs in our commonwealth.

And who better than a teacher to be our first featured distinguished alumnus? ■■■

- Dr. Feroz



VIKINGS REUNITED

The **VCHS Class of 1993** observed their **30 Year Reunion** on the last weekend of August.

Rev. Bill O'Brien celebrated Mass at the VC chapel for the members. Freshman student tour guide **Sophie Dinovitz** provided VC alumni with a tour of the school campus, pointing out the updated gym lighting and stunning new windows.

Alumnus **Michael Molitoris** captured a beautiful image of VC (shown on right) when "the clouds were perfect for the reflection on the library windows."

The class also enjoyed a reunion dinner and conversation at Bella Cucina in Franklin.

*Congratulations,
Class of 1993!*

(Pictured Left to Right):
Jessica Antkowiak-Weagraff, Nellie Scanlon, Mike Molitoris, Fr. Bill O'Brien, Melanie (Turner) Campbell, Lou Heliker, and Eric Burchfield



THEN AND NOW

In 1993, you could prepare breakfast on a budget... Eggs averaged 91 cents per dozen, a loaf of white bread was 75 cents, and a gallon of milk cost \$2.86! Compare those prices to the market averages in January of this year: \$4.82/dozen eggs, \$1.89/loaf of bread, and \$4.20/whole milk.* Who's ready to hitch a ride back in time just to visit the grocery store?

*Data according to *Business Insider* and <www.bls.gov>

ANNUAL FUND COMMITMENT CAMPAIGN TO LAUNCH SOON

Dear Friends of VRCS,

Welcome to the new academic year! It is wonderful to see the students arrive back to St. Stephen Elementary and Venango Catholic Jr. / Sr. HS to renew their academic and spiritual development. Our students come from the entire region — Venango, Clarion, Crawford and Forest Counties, respectively.

Venango Region Catholic School (VRCS) would like to sincerely thank our parishioners, alumni and donors who have faithfully supported Catholic education at SSS, SPS and VC. Every year, parishes, individuals and local businesses have participated in our fundraisers and annual appeals, and we are so grateful.

Through your support, the lives of generations of students have been blessed. Your contributions have enabled us to:

- Give our students the spiritual resources needed to sustain them through life's ups and downs
- Develop citizens who care for others and are committed to service in their communities
- Cultivate high academic skill preparation
- Give students attractive options in terms of post-secondary education and careers.

Our mission continues. This fall we are challenged with formidable targets in terms of enrollment and revenue. The goals are ambitious but *achievable*.

In mid-September, we will launch a \$1 million dollar Fall Commitment Campaign aimed at building a solid



foundation for the future of Catholic education here in our area. Please watch for the campaign roll-out announcement. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged and are considered tax-deductible.

Catholic education lasts a lifetime! Our graduates make a positive difference in the nation, state, and in their communities! Your financial support is urgently needed and will be much appreciated. As Scripture says, "God loves a cheerful giver."

Thank you for your prayers and for your commitment to Catholic education!

Ray Feroz, Ph.D.

Ray Feroz, Ph. D.
Interim President

Bob Puleo

Bob Puleo
VRCS Board Chair

SHARING OUR MISSION

Faithful to the Roman Catholic tradition, Venango Region Catholic School (VRCS), will educate children to be people of faith and service guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church. We will prepare students to be critical thinkers and to lead lives of integrity.

The mission of the Catholic community of VRCS is to ensure all students receive the encouragement, and resources for their academic, emotional, and physical growth by challenging and engaging our students to be people of faith, scholarship, and service in thought-provoking academic excellence.

MEET THE ADMIN

PRINCIPAL SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Katherine Chandley

EDUCATION (College/Degrees/Awards):
Westminster College, B.A. in English

Edinboro U of PA, M.Ed. in Educational Psychology and M.A. in Counseling

Gannon University, School Administration Certificate

FAVORITE QUOTE: "The best way out is always through." - Robert Frost

TEACHING BACKGROUND:

I have been in education since 2007. I taught language arts (Grades 7-12) for the *Erie City School District* for 10 years. I also was an adjunct writing professor at *Mercyhurst University NE*.

After leaving Erie, I was hired to teach theology and be the campus minister at *VCHS* from 2017-2020. In the 20-21 school year, I worked as a professional school counselor for *Erie Catholic School System*. I returned to *VRCS* in 2022 and have been principal for 2 years.



**VRCS may be small,
but WE ARE mighty!**

SHARE A SUCCESS STORY:

I am constantly made proud when I see current VRCS students or alumni in the community. Our children carry themselves well; they are polite and loving. I am never embarrassed to say where I work.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT VRCS?

After working in public schools, I love that at VRCS my faith is part of my work every day. I often felt that I had to hide that aspect of myself when I taught in a public school. I enjoy praying each day and watching the students travel on their faith journeys.

WHAT LIGHTS UP YOUR DAY AND MAKES YOU FEEL EXCITED TO BE A PART OF VRCS?

I always feel excited when teachers tell me about a great lesson that they taught or how they have tried a new strategy to help students learn.

Also, I was very proud when **Mariah Wessell** was crowned Oil Heritage Queen in 2022 [and **Sadie Kalamajka** was chosen as a Queen Candidate this summer]. I felt that this was such a special honor for one of our students. VRCS may be small, but we are mighty. Our students receive so many tools to be successful in this world. ■■■

SUMMER FESTIVAL = SUCCESS!



The strong winds and rain didn't prevent a handful of alumni, faculty, and VRCS families from hosting a phenomenal VRCS Festival on July 21-22. Administration and school board members joined in the fun to coordinate myriad raffles, game booths and food. If the games didn't attract you, you couldn't resist the delicious smells wafting from the food cart.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the multitude of volunteers, sponsors and participants who made this event possible! Our float in the Oil Heritage Parade was one of the best displays to date due to some very talented parents. (We are looking forward to participating in other similar events in the future, e.g. Franklin's Light Up Night.) While there were too many individuals to recognize everyone by name, we would like to thank **Misti Kresinski** for spearheading this event. Also, many thanks to the team of daily mass goers that generously offered their support behind the scenes.

In the words of one VRCS parent: "I enjoy the festival because it is a safe environment for my children. There are a wide range of games for the various age levels, and everything is contained. Best of all... it is so affordable!"

** If you know someone who could benefit from a premier Catholic education, please refer them for a tour of the VRCS campuses by calling 814.677.3098. 🇺🇸*

Ray Feroz, Ph.D. (VC '68)
VRCS INTERIM PRESIDENT +
NEWSLETTER EDITOR



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McKenzie Healy
PRESIDENT, HOME & SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION



(Left to Right) McKenzie Healy, Natalie Toscano, Matt Toscano, Katy Lingler, and Matt Healy sport their Hawaiian shirts in honor of Jimmy Buffett.

ANNUAL VRCS GOLF OUTING

Venango Region Catholic School hosted a 2-person Golf Scramble on **Sunday, September 3** at **Hi-Level Golf Course** (Kossuth, PA).

It was a beautiful morning for the thirty-seven golfers who competed. Congratulations to each of the prize winners:

MIXED DIVISION

1st: Matt + McKenzie Healy
2nd: Jim Kwasny + Brittany Mitchell
3rd: Matt + Natalie Toscano

WOMEN'S DIVISION

Donna Long + Denise Guilinger
 Ronda Lancaster + Rosemary Lancaster
 Denise Boughner + Diana Mohnkern

MEN'S DIVISION

Nick Glamerone + Traden Gray
 Matt Kuhn + Kyle Cook
 (Tie) Eric Boone + Dave Eisenberg
 and Alec Thureau + Mike Cook

A special **THANK YOU** to all of the participants and sponsors, especially the following:

Tournament Sponsor — The Betty and Gerry Miller Family

Gold Sponsor — In Memory of Tom and Julia Ward

Dinner Sponsor — Auto Divide and Little Guy Grill

Bronze Sponsor — Cory Campbell, Handsome Lake Energy, & Dale Woodard Gent McFate Law Firm

Hole Sponsor — Stifel, Tim and Cindy Foster, Edward Jones, Joseph and Janice Grunenwald

Hole-In-One Prize Sponsor — St. Patrick Church and Oil City Catholic Community

Once coined the VC Golf Scramble, this fundraiser has been running for decades. The yearly outing is a great way for golf enthusiasts to support our school while making memories and enjoying the course with both amateur and experienced golfers. *We look forward to seeing you on the green again next year!*



www.venangocatholic.org



@VenangoRegionCatholicSchool



VENANGO REGION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Stephen Elementary

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Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3035

Venango Catholic Jr. / Sr. High

1505 West First Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3098

PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS:

November 5
November 11

TBD (Late November
or Early December)

Roast Beef Dinner – VCHS Cafeteria
Alumni & Friends Dance – featuring *The Route 8 Band* – VCHS Cafeteria
Polly Miller Memorial Soup Fest

Thanks for supporting our recent fund-raisers:
Steelers Raffle Tickets, Lottery Tickets and Splash for Cash Raffle.